# AN ASSESSMENT OF LIFE SKILLS AMONG MALE AND FEMALE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN MYSORE DISTRICT

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## ABSTRACT

High School Students come under the age group of adolescence. Adolescents in future are the one who become the productive force of the nation. Life skills are very essential for the High School Students. Life skills are the psychosocial competencies and contributes greatly to achieve psychological, social and mental well-being. The objective of the present study was to examine gender differences in various dimensions of Life skills among High School Students in Mysore District. The present study consists of 1000 samples (500 Male and 500 Female) High School Students. Descriptive Survey Research design was employed to collect the data. Life Skills Scale developed by Anjum Ahamad and Saba Parveen was used for the study. The scale consists of 40 items divided into 10 dimensions those are Self-awareness, Empathy, Critical thinking, Decision making, Problem solving, Effective communication, Creative thinking, Inter personal relationship, Coping with stress and Coping with emotion. The tool has reliability and validity established. Personal information schedule was also included to collect the demographic data. The results revealed that there is significant difference in Life Skills scores between male (M=151.58, SD=14.01) and female students (M=154.94, SD= 13.43) an independent sample t test is calculated and the obtained t (998) = -3.87, *p >.001*. The results indicate that female students demonstrated significantly higher life skills compared to their male counterparts. This study contributes to the understanding of presence of Life Skills among High School Students and helps to develop suitable intervention programmes by inculcating life skills among High School Students. Based on the findings, recommendations will be made for educational settings, policy makers and non-government organizations to design and implement life skills programmes that focus on enhancing life skills among High School Students. The study helps to create Life Skills intervention programme that promote psychological well-being among High School Students.

KEYWORDS: Life Skills, High School Students, Male and Female Students, Life Skills Scale

## INTRODUCTION

High School Students are in the age group of adolescence. Adolescent stage is stressful stage. In this stage a lot of emotional, physical, biological and cognitive changes occur. High school students face lots of problems like inability to communicate properly with parents, teachers and others, lack of self-awareness, lack of emotional and stress coping mechanism, interpersonal relationship, critical and creative thinking are often found at this age. Hence, these deficits lead to stress, lack of self-esteem, emotional, social and behavioural problems. To overcome these problems life skills are very essential to the High School students.

Life skills are psychosocial abilities that help individuals navigate challenges and interactions in their personal, social, and professional lives. They enhance adaptability and resilience, empowering individuals to handle stress, maintain relationships, and make effective decisions. Life skills are fundamental to fostering self-efficacy, emotional intelligence, and coping mechanisms.

According to World Health Organization (WHO, 1997) Life skills are "abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life." UNICEF (2012) Life skills are defined as "a behavior change or behavior development approach designed to address a balance of three areas: knowledge, attitude, and skills."

Aradhana Gokhale,(2016) conducted a study of life skills among secondary school students, helps in the formation of a sound personality in the child. School education can broadly be classified as elementary (class I to VIII) and secondary (IX-XII) education. Today, moreover societal pressures, greater complexity, uncertainty and diversity, rapid changes in the environment and continued deprivation put student's lives facing an uncertain future. Life skills became essential for students. Life skills are psychosocial competencies and contribute greatly to achieving psychological, social and mental well-being. WHO, UNICEF and UNFPA listed 10 skills as the most essential.

Rani S. & Neeraj (2020) conducted a study to compare the life skills of female and male senior secondary school students. A random sampling method was used, and the study includes 200 students from Sonepat district. The results showed a significant difference in life skills between male and female students, especially with female students scoring higher in all dimensions of life skills, including decision-making, problem-solving, empathy, self-awareness, communication skills, interpersonal relationships, coping with emotions, coping with stress, creative thinking, and critical thinking. These reviews

supports the present research study.

**MATERIALS AND METHODS**
Objective of the Study: To examine gender differences in various dimensions of life skills, including Self- awareness, Empathy, Critical thinking, Decision making, Problem solving, Effective communication, Creative thinking, Interpersonal relationships, Coping with stress and Coping with emotion.

**Hypothesis:** There is a significant difference between male and female students in various dimensions of life skills, including self-awareness, empathy, critical thinking, decision-making, problem- solving, effective communication, creative thinking, interpersonal relationships, coping with stress, and coping with emotion.

**Variables:**
**Independent Variable:** High School Students, Gender, Age, Domicile, Family Type.
**Dependent Variable:** Life Skills
**Operational Definitions:**

**Life Skills:** Refers to the set of abilities and competencies essential for dealing effectively with the challenges of life. The life skills scale developed by Anjum Ahamad and Saba Parveen(2021) will be used as the reference to measure these skills.

**High School Students:** Refers to students enrolled in the 8th, 9th, or 10th standard in a high school in Mysore district. This is based on school documents.

**Age:** The age of the students was recorded based on the information provided in the personal information schedule designed by the researcher.

**Gender:** The gender of the students (male or female) wasrecorded based on responses in the personal information schedule.

**Class:** The grade or standard the student belongs to (8th, 9th, or 10th) was recorded in the personal information schedule.

**Research Design:**
The research adopted a Descriptive survey research Design. The design involves:
- **Survey Method:** A structured questionnaire was used to collect data on the life skills of high school students.
- **Questionnaires:** Standardized life skills scale was administered to the students to quantify their levels of life skills across various dimensions.

**Participants:**
The present study involved a total of 1000 high school students from Mysore district, ensuring an equal representation of 500 Male and 500 Female. The students were selected from various high schools across the district to create a representative sample of the student population.

To assess the life skills of these students, the Life Skills Scale (English and Kannada Version) was administered. The Life Skills Scale developed in English and later translated into Kannada by subject expert translators to ensure linguistic accuracy and cultural relevance.

The selected schools for data collection included: Morarji Desai Residential School, Varakunda, Morarji Desai Model Residential School, S. Hoskote, Sri Kuvempu High School, Kuvempunagar, Shri Adichunchungiri Central School, Kuvempunagar, Rotary West School, Saraswathipuram, Rotary Midtown Mysore, Karnataka Public School, Kuvempunagar, Mysore Lions School, Bannimantapa, Mysuru, Bharatha Seva Dala High School, Saraswathipuram, Morarji Desai Residential School, Sabbanahalli (Bilikere), Hunsur Taluk, Babu Jagjivan Ram School, Rajivnagar, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Residential School, Yelwala, Shri Nataraj Public School, Mysuru, Sree Nataraja High School, Mysuru.

Prior to data collection, permission was obtained from the respective Headmasters/Headmistresses/Principals of the selected high schools. Additionally, informed consent was sought from the participating students, ensuring voluntary participation in the study.

**Tools:**
**Personal Information Schedule:** Personal information schedule was used to collect the general data of the high school students. It consisted of the information like name, age, gender, class, School Name, Domicile (Rural/Urban), Family Type(Joint/Nuclear).

**Life Skills Scale:** Life skills scale developed by Anjum Ahamad and Saba Parveen(2021) was applied for the study. The scale consists of 40 items. Divided into 10 dimensions those are Self- awareness, Empathy, Critical thinking, Decision making, Problem solving, Effective communication, Creative thinking, Inter personal relationship, Coping with stress, Coping with emotion. The test has reliability and validity established.

**Procedure of the Study**
The study followed by a systematic and structured approach to ensure the reliability and validity of the findings. The procedure consisting of the following key steps:

**Step 1: Preparation and Design**
The researcher designed the Personal Information Schedule and selected the Life Skills Scale for data collection. The Personal Information Schedule was developed to record essential demographic details such as age, gender, class, and domicile. The Life Skills Scale was chosen as the primary tool for assessing various dimensions of life skills among high school students.

**Step 2: Translation of Tools**
To ensure accessibility and ease of understanding for all students, the Life Skills Scale was translated into Kannada by expert translators. This step was crucial in minimizing language barriers and ensuring that students from different

linguistic backgrounds could comprehend and respond to the scale effectively.

**Step 3: Pilot Study**

Before administering the Life Skills Scale to the full sample, a pilot study was conducted. The pilot study aimed to:

• Test the reliability and clarity of the translated version.

• Identify any ambiguities or difficulties in understanding the questionnaire.

• Assess the time required for completion of the scale.

• Ensure that the scale was appropriate for the target age group. Based on the findings from the pilot study, necessary modifications were made to enhance the clarity and effectiveness of the questionnaire.

**Step 4: Data Collection**

Once the final version of the Life Skills Scale was ready, data collection was initiated in various high schools across Mysore district. The following procedure was followed:

1. Permission was obtained from the respective Headmasters/ Headmistresses/Principals of the selected schools.

2. Informed consent was obtained from participating students to ensure voluntary participation.

3. The researcher visited each school and introduced themselves to the students. The objectives and importance of the study were explained clearly.

4. A rapport was established with the students to create a comfortable environment for participation. Students were assured that their responses would be kept confidential and used for research purposes only.

5. A total of 1000 students (500 Male and 500 Female) were provided with the Life Skills Scale and detailed instructions on how to complete it.

6. Students were guided on carefully reading and responding to the items on the scale. Any doubts were clarified before they proceeded.

7. Once the students completed the Life Skills Scale, the questionnaires were collected for further processing.

**Step 5: Data Analysis**

After the completion of data collection, the following steps were carried out for analysis:

• Responses were checked based on the Life Skills Scale Manual.

• Raw scores were calculated for each student.

• The raw scores were converted into Z-scores to standardize the data.

• The level of life skills was classified according to the Life Skills Scale Manual, ensuring consistency in interpretation.

• Appropriate statistical techniques were used to analyze the data, including descriptive and inferential statistics to examine differences and correlations among variables.

This systematic approach ensured that the study was conducted in a scientifically rigorous manner, providing valid and reliable insights into the life skills of high school students in Mysore district.

**Statistical Analysis and Interpretation:**

The data collected was analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). Descriptive and inferential statistical techniques will be used to interpret the data:

• **Descriptive Statistics:** Measures such as mean, standard deviation, and frequency distribution was used to summarize the data.

• **Inferential Statistics:** T-tests, ANOVA, and other relevant statistical tests wasapplied to examine differences in life skills between male and female students and across other variables (e.g., class level, age).

This analysis will provide the necessary insights into the life skills possessed by high school students and help in identifying gender-based differences.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**The table Shows the N, Mean, Standard Deviation and t ratio on difference on life skills among male and female high school students**

| | Group | A total Scores on Life skills | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | N | Mean | SD | t | p |
| A total Scores on Life Skills | Male Students | 500 | 151.58 | 14.01 | 3.87 | .001 |
| | Female Students | 500 | 154.94 | 13.43 | | |
| | Total | 1000 | | | | |

**The graph Shows the mean score difference on life skills among male and female high school students**
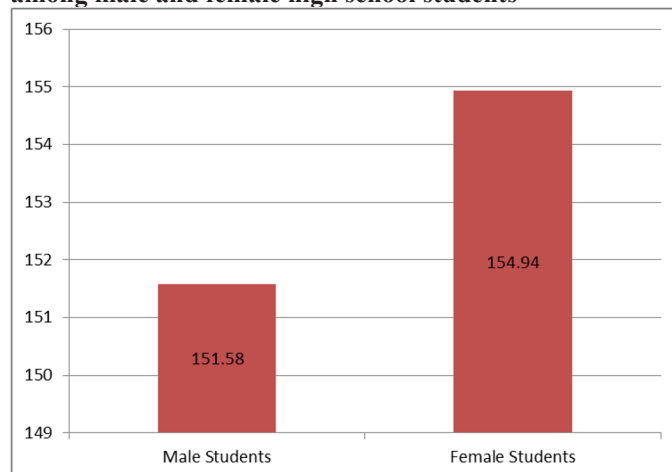


A t-test was conducted to compare the life skills scores between male and female high school students. The results indicated a significant difference in life skills scores between male (M = 151.58, SD = 14.01) and female students (M = 154.94, SD = 13.43), t (998) = -3.87, p < .001. This suggests that female students demonstrated significantly higher life skills compared to their male counterparts.

**There is a significant difference between male and female students in various dimensions of life skills, including self-awareness, empathy, critical thinking, decision- making,**

**problem-solving, effective communication, creative thinking, interpersonal relationships, coping with stress, and coping with emotion.**

The findings of the study align with existing literature that suggests gender differences in life skills development. Prior research has indicated that female students often exhibit stronger interpersonal skills, emotional intelligence, and decision-making abilities compared to their male counterparts (Gururaj & Rani, 2016; Singh & Kaur, 2018). The present study supports this assertion, as female students demonstrated significantly higher scores in critical thinking, decision-making, creative thinking, interpersonal relationships, and coping with emotions. These skills are closely associated with emotional awareness and social interactions, which are often more emphasized in female socialization patterns (Eisenberg et al., 2019).

Contrary to present investigation some studies that suggest male students excel in problem-solving and critical thinking due to their engagement in structured and competitive learning environments (Halpern, 2018), the current study found that female students outperformed males in critical thinking. This finding may be attributed to evolving educational practices that encourage analytical reasoning among all students, irrespective of gender. However, the non-significant differences in problem-solving and effective communication are consistent with previous research indicating that these skills are nurtured equally among both genders through academic and extracurricular activities (Hyde, 2014).

Several factors may explain these gender-based differences in life skills. Sociocultural influences play a crucial role, as female students are often encouraged to develop emotional regulation and interpersonal skills from an early age (Bian et al., 2017). Additionally, educational institutions may provide more opportunities for female students to engage in activities that enhance these skills, such as collaborative learning and peer discussions (Eccles & Wang, 2016). Another possible explanation is the increasing emphasis on gender-inclusive education, which has contributed to minimizing gaps in certain skills while still highlighting differences in others (Tomasetto et al., 2020).

In conclusion, while this study confirms that female students exhibit higher proficiency in specific life skills, the lack of significant differences in other areas suggests that gender alone is not a defining factor in overall life skills development. Future research should explore the underlying causes of these differences, considering factors such as educational interventions, cultural expectations, and individual learning experiences.

**CONCLUSION**
The present investigation aims to contribute to the development of a life skills curriculum in schools, which could greatly improve students' ability to handle life challenges effectively. Life skills play an important vital role in the physical and psychological well-being of school students. Life skills abilities enhance the competence of students to face the realities of life more effectively and efficiently. The present study results proved that female students demonstrated significantly higher life skills compared to their male counterparts.

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